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Somaśarman, Somavaṃśa and Somasiddhānta
A Pāśupata tradition in seventh-century Dakṣiṇa Kosala
Studies in the Skandapurāṇa III*

HANS BAKKER, Groningen

(9)

I Harāya Namaḥ

The first fruit of Minoru Hara's life-task-project to clarify the early history of the Śaiva religion appeared in the Indo-Iranian Journal of 1958 under the title *Nakulīśa-Pāśupata-Darśanam* (HARA 1958). This was followed by the submission of his dissertation, *Materials for the study of Pāśupata Śaivism*, to the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies of Harvard University in 1966 (HARA 1967). Ever since, Hara has contributed to the research into the history of the Pāśupata religion by a continuous series of meticulous studies.[1] Thanks to these studies our knowledge of this enigmatic but fascinating branch of early Hinduism has significantly increased. Paucity of sources, however, has inevitably hampered our understanding of the process of origin and spread of this religious movement. Hara, like other scholars before him, duly recognized that the Puranic text corpus contains numerous references to the Pāśupata religion. Yet, due to inconsistencies of all sorts and uncertainty as to their exact date, he considered, rightly, the use of these texts for historic purposes a hazardous affair and consequently assigned them to the periphery of historical research. That is to say, for the time being, since,

> Some day in the future, when all Purāṇic texts are critically edited and the inter-relationships among them established, they may help us in tracing the history of Pāśupata Śaivism (HARA 1967, 12f.).

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* For Studies in the *Skandapurāṇa* I and II see BAKKER 1996 and YOKOCHI 1999. My sincere thanks are due to Drs Dominic GOODALL and Harunaga ISAACSON for commenting on a draft of this paper. I am also much obliged to Prof Alexis SANDERSON who presented me at an earlier stage with much valuable information, on which I drew for this article.

[1] The latest in this series is Hara's contribution to the Conference on 'Sāṃkhya and Yoga' held in Lausanne in 1998 (HARA 1999).

Festschrift Minoru Hara (2000), S. 1-19

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This day is, after thirty-four years, still far off. Critical editions of some Purāṇa texts have indeed been prepared since, by the All-India Kashiraj Trust in Ramnagar in particular, but they have not really brought the progress in Purāṇa studies that one should wish. Partly this is due to the unwieldiness of the Puranic text corpus, partly to the fact that no old manuscript material has been used for these editions. How valuable ancient manuscripts are for gaining insight in the Puranic text tradition itself and for the assessment of these texts as historical sources may be shown by the original *Skandapurāṇa* (SP), the edition of which is a long-term project of the Institute of Indian Studies in Groningen. Because the oldest manuscript of this text is dated AD 810, we can be certain that the information it contains dates from the eighth century or earlier. But even in this particular case the use of the Purāṇa text as a source of historical information remains a venturesome undertaking. Its historical value is greatly enhanced, however, when it proves possible to relate its data to other historical sources such as inscriptions. It is a matter of good fortune that this turns out to be the case in chapter 167 of the original *Skandapurāṇa*, a chapter — transmitted in two old Nepalese manuscripts, among which the one dated in AD 810 — which deals with the traditional history and holy places of the Pāśupata and which is, as we will show, partly in agreement with epigraphical evidence of the seventh century. In this tribute to Hara I intend to make a modest contribution to the objective envisaged by the great Japanese scholar, viz. 'tracing the history of Pāśupata Śaivism.'

II Śaiva Cosmology

The cosmology developed in mainstream early tantric Śaivism distinguishes between the Pure (*śuddhādhvan*) and the Impure Universe (*aśuddhādhvan*). Both universes are hierarchically structured; the different levels of reality or domains are called *tattva*. A standard hierarchy counts 31 domains in the Impure Universe and five domains in the Pure one.[2] The domain that forms the trait d'union between both universes is the Māyātattva. According to the *Svacchandatantra*, this reality can be divided into two layers (*puṭa*), which are separated by a knot or barrier (*granthi*).[3] Each layer com-

[2] See e.g. DAVIS 1991, 45. The canonical list of 36 *tattvas* is, as has been demonstrated by GOODALL 1998, LI-LV, in fact a consensus only reached 'in the post-scriptural Śaiva Siddhānta of the commentators' (ibid. LII).

[3] The *Svacchanda* is a Bhairava (Mantrapīṭha) tantra and does not belong to the tradition of the Śaiva Siddhānta, though it seems to be quite close to this tradition (SANDERSON 1988, 669f.).

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prises six 'worlds' (*bhuvana*) that are reigned over by altogether twelve Rudras. The barrier or *granthi* seems actually to be the border between both universes and may be considered a layer or *madhyapuṭa* by itself (SvT 10.1122-1131).

The first Rudra on our side of the barrier is Gopati and the Rudra reigning the lowest 'world' of the sub-barrier layer of the Māyātattva is Gahana.[4] Directly underneath him spreads the 'net of bonds' (*pāśajāla*),[5] the created world that emerges from the Māyā Reality, assuming material form through the *tattvas* including those known from the Sāṃkhya system. The first Rudra on yonder side of the barrier is Kṣemeśa, followed by Brahmasvāmin; the principal Rudra of the Māyā Reality is Ananta.[6] The *Svacchanda* and its commentator seem to be confused as to whether the supra-barrier layer of the Māyā Reality still pertains to the Impure or to the Pure Universe (SvT 10.1129-31); the *Niśvāsamukha*, however, considers it still all part of the *aśuddhādhvan* (4.151-155).[7] In the middle, according to the *Svacchanda*, that is on the barrier itself, at the very top of the Impure Universe, reigns the bountiful lord Ananta, the Master of the World (*bhagavān ananteśo jagatpatiḥ*), who creates at will, is omniscient, maker of all, and dedicated to meting out confinement and grace (SvT 10.1127-8). Commenting on this passage Kṣemarāja observes that the *Mataṅgaśāstra* situates Vigraheśāna in this *madhyapuṭa*, who is surrounded by eight Rudras: Śarva, Bhava, Ugra, Bhīma, Bhasman, Antaka, Dundubhi, and Śrīvatsa.[8] The *Niśvāsamukha*

The *granthi* is not a universally shared feature of the Śaiva cosmos (no mention of it is made in the *Mṛgendratantra*, for instance).

[4] SvT 10.1124. Cf. *Mataṅga* 1.8.86-89.

[5] *Niśvāsamukha* 4.149-151. For this text see below n. 7.

[6] SvT 10.1125-6. Cf. *Mataṅga* 1.8.79-81.

[7] The *Niśvāsamukha* is an unpublished early Śaiva Siddhānta text, which in Paṭala 4 deals with the Atimārga. In a letter to the author (21-7-97), an edition of a portion of this text (4.146-158) with an elaborate apparatus of testimonia was generously placed at my disposal by Professor SANDERSON (Oxford). The text is known from a MS in the National Archives in Kathmandu (*Nepal Catalogue* I p. 137, MS No. 277) and a MS in the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine (London), Sanskrit MS I 33; the latter MS is, according to SANDERSON, an apograph of the Nepalese MS. The same scholar informed me that this text serves as an introduction to the four Sūtras of the *Niśvāsa*, i.e. the *Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā*, which is contained in the same codex. On this manuscript see also GOODALL 1998, XLI n. 95. GOODALL (ibid. n. 96) argues that the *Niśvāsakārikā* and the *Dīkṣottara* may also be connected to this text. Dominic GOODALL informed me that there is one more apograph of this early manuscript in the National Archives, Kathmandu (MS No. 5-2406).

[8] Kṣemarāja *ad* SvT 10.1127ab. Kṣemarāja adds that the Śrīpūrvaśāstra (i.e. *Mālinīvijayottaratantra* 5.28-29) speaks of only eight deities (*iśvarāṣṭa*) in the Māyātattva that form a *maṇḍala* of the size of a thumb, the first one of them being Mahādeva. *Mataṅga* 1.8.83-85: *etebhyo 'dhaḥ*

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places Vigraheśa immediately above Gahana.[9]

In the Pure Universe, above the reality (*tattva*) of Śuddhavidyā (Vāgīśvarī) are, according to the *Svacchanda*, the worlds of the eight Rudras who are incarnated in the eight Pramāṇa texts of the Pāśupata: Pañcārtha etc.[10] Though none of these texts has come to light so far, we have a glimpse of the *Pañcārthapramāṇa*, as this text is quoted by Kṣemarāja *ad Svacchanda* 1.41-43. This fragment establishes that also the prime Pramāṇa of the Lākula division of the Pāśupata (see below) — in contrast with the system known from the *Pāśupatasūtra* and its commentary — acknowledges the ascending hierarchy of Rudra worlds; these are classified into three categories, namely *aghora, ghora*, and *ghoraghoratara*. Here we meet the very same Rudras again: 'Those Rudras who have been mentioned, beginning with Gopati and ending with Gahana, they, however, are designated 'terrible' (*ghora*); they live in various worlds.'[11]

With regard to the fourth of these Pramāṇa texts, the *Hṛdaya*, Kṣemarāja makes an interesting remark. From this text six other Pramāṇa texts have been extracted that deal with ritual acts (*kriyā*) and in this respect differ from the other eight Pramāṇas, which deal with knowledge (*jñāna*).[12] These ritual Pramāṇas are said to have been revealed by a pupil of Laku(leśa), Musulendra.[13]

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saṃsthito granthir durbhedyaś cātivistṛtaḥ / yatrāsau vigraheśānaḥ sthitaḥ paramadurjayaḥ //83// vṛto rudrair mahābhāgaiḥ svaśaktibalaśālibhiḥ / bhuvanaṃ bhuvaneśasya vinodaśatasaṃkulam //84// yatra śarvo bhavaś caiva hy ugro bhīmaś ca vīryavān / bhasmāntako dundubhiś ca śrīvatsaś ca mahābalaḥ // 85 //.

[9] *Niśvāsmukha* 4.151cd: *gahanaṃ ca tatordhvaṃ tu, vigraheśaṃ tatordhvataḥ.*

[10] The eight Pramāṇa texts are *Pañcārtha, Guhya, Rudrāṅkuśa, Hṛdaya, Lakṣaṇa, Vyūha, Ākarṣa, Ādarśa*. Kṣemarāja *ad* SvT 10.1134: *ete rudrā etannāmakapāśupataśāstrāvatārakāḥ* (SvT II, 275).

[11] *Pañcārthapramāṇa*: *proktā gopatipūrvā ye rudrās tu gahanāntagāḥ / te tu ghorāḥ samākhyātā nānābhuvanavāsinaḥ //* (SvT I, 16).

[12] One wonders whether these ritual acts are subsumed under the six forms of worship specified in the *Pāśupatasūtra* (PS) 1.8: laughter, song, dance, drumming on the mouth, salutations, and silent meditation on the five *brahmamantras* (PS 1.8: *hasitagītanṛttaḍuṃḍuṃkāranamaskārajapyopahāreṇopatiṣṭhet /*).

[13] The names of these texts are given as (SvT II, 275): *Purakalpa, Kanaka, Śālā, Niruttara, Viśva, Prapañca*. They are no longer extant.

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This brings Kṣemarāja to the difference between two divisions within the Pāśupata movement (referred to as 'Tantra'), namely between the Pāśupata proper, founded by Lakuleśa, and hence designated 'Lākula,' and the Mausula, founded by the eponymous pupil of Lakuleśa, Musula or Musulendra. These Mausulas, though Pāśupatas in the wider sense — after all they too stem from Lakuleśa — are put on a lower scale by the *Svacchanda* and its commentator. Whereas the observance of the Mausulas leads them finally to the Māyā Reality (SvT 11.71cd), the Pāśupatas who base themselves on the eight Pramāṇas and belong to the Lākula division reach the Īśvara Reality in the Pure Universe (SvT 10.1169cd-70ab, 11.71ab).

III The Pāśupata Movement

The differences between the various traditions that form the Pāśupata movement become more clear from the treatment (in *Svacchanda* Paṭala 11) of the ascending hierarchy of highest stations (*para(ma)ṃ padam*) that can be reached by the followers of the various sects.[14] The Mausula is here grouped together with the Kāruka,[15] of which Kṣemarāja only notes that it has been founded by someone else, descended in the place Kārohaṇa.[16] The followers of both sects, whose observances (*vrata*) deal with a multitude of rituals, reach the worlds of the Rudras Kṣemeśa and Brahmasvāmin, whom the *Svacchanda* (10.1125) had situated on yonder side of the barrier (*granthi*), though still in the Māyā Reality.[17]

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[14] A similar hierarchy, though unfortunately without the allocation of the Pāśupata sects by name, is given by Rāmakaṇṭha in his sub-commentary (*upanyāsa*) of the (lost) partial commentary on the *Raurava* by Sadyojyotis, the *Sarvāgamaprāmāṇya*, reconstructed by GOODALL 1998, XXII-XXV.

[15] SvT 11.71cd; quoted by Jayaratha *ad Tantrāloka* 1.34 (I, 70): *mausule kāruke caiva māyā-tattvaṃ prakīrtitam.*

[16] Who this other incarnation is does not become clear. He might be 'Karuka' whose name evidently connects him, in the view of Kṣemarāja, with the place of his descent, Kārohaṇa. Bhandarkar 1913, 121 identifies this sect with the Kālāmukha (Kālānana) and conjectures that 'the word Kāruka is probably a corruption of Kauruṣya, the name of the third of the four (according to the Purāṇas) pupils of Lakulīśa, or this last name may be the Sanskritised form of the original Kāruka.' Cf. PATHAK 1960, 10. LORENZEN 1991, 84, on good grounds, rejects this identification.

[17] Kṣemarāja *ad* SvT 11.71cd: *śrīlakuleśaśiṣyeṇa musulendreṇa kārohaṇasthānāvatīrṇena cāpareṇa māyātattvagatakṣemeśabrahmasvāmiprāptihetukriyābahulāḥ sve sve śāstre vrataviśeṣā uktā iti māyātattvam eva tatra paramaṃ padam.* Cf. above n. 15.

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Within the Lākula division the *Svacchanda* seems to distinguish between the Vaimalas and those who follow the Pramāṇa, more specifically the *Pañcārthapramāṇa*, according to Kṣemarāja; both reach the Īśvara Reality, but the former's highest station is the world of the Rudra Tejeśa, while of the latter it is that of Dhruveśa.[18] The *Mathurā Pilaster Inscription of Chandragupta II: the Year 61* (i.e. AD 380) reports that a tradition of preceptors (*guru*) whose names end in *vimala* and who may have hence belonged to the Vaimala division, were affiliated to a lineage of teachers (*ācārya*) that traced its origin back to Kuśika, supposedly the first disciple of Lakulīśa. The sacred memory of these *gurus* was kept alive in a 'preceptor's shrine' (*gurvāyatana*), where cult objects were installed bearing their names (Upamiteśvara and Kapileśvara), objects which were to be worshipped by the Māheśvaras.[19] The Vaimalas may therefore have adhered to the Pāśupata school that followed the Pañcārtha doctrine as laid down in the *Pāśupatasūtra* (see below p. 14). Finally, the *Svacchanda* specifies a group within the Lākula division that practises the observance of the skull (*kapālavrata*). This group seems to coincide with or to encompass the Vaimala, though Kṣemarāja's commentary does not make this very clear.[20] So far as

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[18] SvT 11.72. Kṣemarāja (II, 328): *ye 'pi vaimalākhyāḥ pāśupatabhedāḥ, tathā pañcārthapramāṇāṣṭakoktopāsāparāḥ pare, teṣām īśvaratattvagatateješadhruveśau paraṃ padam ity āha*, **tejeśo vaimalānāṃ ca pramāṇe ca dhruvaṃ padam** //72//. Cf. SvT 10.1174ab, where Tejeśa and Dhruveśa are both said to be the highest station for the followers of the Pramāṇas (see below n. 20).

[19] SIRCAR 1942 (= Sel. Ins. I), 277-279. BAKKER 1997, 68.

[20] Kṣemarāja *ad Svacchanda* 11.73-74ab: *vaimalapramāṇaśāstraniṣṭho hi* **dīkṣājñānaviśuddhātma dehāntaṃ yāva caryayā / kapālavratam āsthāya svaṃ svaṃ gacchati tat padam** //11.73//. *dīkṣājñānaviśuddhātmeti pādena proktakriyāpradhānavratamātraniṣṭhamausulakārukebhyo 'tra viśeṣo darśitaḥ / svaṃ svaṃ proktateješadhruveśarūpam / yad uktaṃ purastād — 'tejeśaś ca dhruveśaś ca pramāṇānāṃ paraṃ padam'* (SvT 10.1174) *iti* /73/ *ye tu kapālādyasthivratadhāriṇaḥ pūrvoktalākulāmnāyāt — 'bhasmani śayīta'* (PS 1.3) *ityādipāśupataśāstracodanātaḥ* **japabhasmakriyāniṣṭhās te vrajanty aiśvaraṃ padam** //11.74ab //

'For, he who follows the Pramāṇa Śāstra and the Vaimala,

"His soul is purified by initiation and knowledge, by (keeping to) the prescribed praxis until death, while abiding by the Kapāla observance — he goes to that station that is his own." (SvT 11.73)

The quarter-verse 'His soul is purified by initiation and knowledge' indicates the difference here from the afore-mentioned Mausulas and Kārukas, who are devoted only to observances that are chiefly ritualistic. 'His own (station),' that is to say the afore-mentioned Tejeśa or Dhruveśa; this has been stated above: "Tejeśa and Dhruveśa are the highest station (for those who follow) the Pramāṇas." (SvT 10.1174) But those, (issuing) from the afore-mentioned Lākula stream, who practise the observances of bones like the skull (*kapāla*), on account of injunctions in the Pāśupata Śāstra such as "One should lie in ashes"(*Pāśupatasūtra* 1.3),

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to the Lākula division.

The question now arises: who is this disciple of Lakuleśa, Musulendra or Musula, who initiated a sect designated 'Mausula'? Evidently we are here concerned with a group within the Pāśupata movement that was chiefly engaged in ritual (worship) activity, forsaking the more rigorous portion of the Pāśupata praxis. As such it might be a group that stood between the lay Māheśvaras (*laukikas*) and the tough ascetics with their transgressive practices. Unfortunately, none of the Pramāṇa texts ascribed by Kṣemarāja to this school has survived and little more information about the sect is known from the later Śaiva Siddhānta, which, in view of its ritualistic orientation, in a way may be conceived of as its successor (see below p. 15). However, the alleged dependence of the Mausula text corpus on the Lākula Pramāṇas seems to allow the inference that this sect also ackowledged the hierarchy of Rudra worlds and as such deviated from the Pañcārtha school.

IV The Epigraphical Evidence from Malhar

The antiquity of a tradition that traced its origin back to a certain Mugalisa who was intiated by Lakulīśa is secured by an inscription, of which the text has recently become available. I refer to the Malhar Plates of Mahāśivagupta, Year 57 (c. AD 650),[21] which were published first by G. L. RAYAKWAR and Rahul Kumar SINGH in *Purātan* (Vol. 9 (1994), 146f.); a draft of a new edition was kindly put at my disposal by Professor Dr Ajay Mitra SHASTRI (Nagpur).[22] I take 'Mugalisa' to be a corruption/Prakritism of Mudgalīśa or Musalīśa, both names meaning 'Club-bearing Lord.' Musalīśa again may be a variant of Musaleśa/Musuleśa and, having the same meaning, it might not seem too far-fetched to identify the 'Musulendra' of Kṣemarāja with the 'Mugalisa' of the inscription.[23]

"They, devoted to japa, ashes, and ritual, proceed to the station of Īśvara."' (SvT 11.74ab)

[21] For the early chronology of Dakṣiṇa Kosala, the Pāṇḍuvaṃśa dynasty of Śrīpura and the reign of Mahāśivagupta (c. AD 590-650) see BAKKER 1994.

[22] SHASTRI *forthcoming*.

[23] I consider *musula/mausula* to be a variant of *musala/mausala*. Cf. Rāmakaṇṭha's introduction to *Mataṅga* 1.1.1 (p. 2) reading: *lākulamausalādibhyaḥ*.

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I have dealt with this inscription in another article (BAKKER *forthcoming*), but at that time no edition was available to me; instead I based myself on oral information kindly provided by Rahul Kumar SINGH and a summary of its contents by A. M. SHASTRI in his monumental *Inscriptions of the Śarabhapurīyas, Pāṇḍuvaṁśins* and *Somavaṁśins*.[24] To date, photographs of the plates have not yet been published, nor have I seen the plates, in real life or in photographs.[25] Yet, I think that on the basis of the first edition and the draft of the new edition we can arrive at the correct Sanskrit text that was probably intended. Before discussing this inscription any further, I give the edited text of that portion of it that is relevant for the present study. This portion starts with the last word on the first plate (second side), line 8, and ends in line 23 on the second plate, second side.

Malhar Plates of Mahāśivagupta, Year 57, ll. 8-23[26]

[1.8] *viditam a*[1.9]stu bhavatāṃ yathāsmābhir ayaṃ grāmaḥ
sa-**kurapadrakaḥ**,
vājasaneyaca[1.10]*raṇād abhyarthya* **bhāṇḍāgāratulapadrakam***
oṇī-*bhogīyaṃ parivartena dattvā*,
[1.11] *saṃprati sanidhānaḥ sopanidhānaḥ sarvakarādānasametaḥ*
sarvapīḍā[1.12]*vivarjitas sadaśāparādhaḥ pratiṣiddhacāṭabhaṭapraveśaḥ*,
asyāṃ [1.13] *mā*(*gha*?)**-*paurṇamāsyām*,
atraivātmakāritaśrī-**bāleśvarabhaṭṭāraka**-*tapo*[1.14]*vanapratipālanārtham*
āropitebhyaḥ —
śivasya mūrtīnām aṣṭau vigraheśvarāṇāṃ,
ga[1.15]*haneśasya mūrtayo rudrāḥ ṣaṭṣaṣty anugrāhakā yuge yuge parivartamā*-[1.16]*nā*,
adhunā kalikālam āsādya,

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[24] SHASTRI 1995 II, 376-381. For technical details of this inscription see this publication and RAYAKWAR and SINGH 1994.

[25] SHASTRI in his draft reports that this set of three plates of copper is presently in the collection of Shri Raghunandan Prasad PANDEYA. SHASTRI, unlike RAYAKWAR and SINGH, worked from photographs. The text starts on the verso side of the first plate and comprises altogether 40 lines.

[26] Emended edition based on RAYAKWAR and SINGH 1994 and a draft of a new edition by A. M. SHASTRI (*forthcoming*).

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*śrīmal-***lakulīśanātho** *'vatīrya,*
somaśa[l.17]**rmâ-***khyabrāhmaṇakule bhūtvā,*
*mahāvrate (te)na*** *dīkṣito jagadindus,*
tenāpi [l.18] **mugalisas****,
tataḥ somādipāraṃparyakrameṇa sthāne,
*guruśrī-***rudrasoma-***pra*[l.19]*śiṣyaśrī-***tejasoma-***śiṣyebhyaḥ*
*śrīmad-***bhīmasoma-***pādebhyaḥ,*
śiṣyapraśiṣyāṇāṃ [l.20]*yāgadīkṣāvyākhyānavasatipravartanāya*
bhagnavidīrṇadevakula[l.21]*saṃskṛtaye ca /*
mātāpitror ātmanaś ca puṇyābhivṛddhaye,
samakālopa[l.22]*bhogārtham ācandratārakārkam,*
udakapūrvakaṃ tāmraśāsanena pratipādi[l.23]*ta ity* [...].

* SHASTRI takes this as the name of two villages: 'Bhāṇḍāgāra may have been Boḍor in the same tahsil (i.e. Mahāsamund tahsil of the Raipur District), and T(ū)lapadraka may have been a suburb of this locality.' Their names seem to indicate villages where cotton (*tūla*) was cultivated and stored.

** SHASTRI and SINGH read *māpu*.

*** SHASTRI and SINGH read *mahāvratena*. Emendation proposed by H. ISAACSON.

**** SHASTRI and SINGH read: '*mugalisas* (?)'. Mugalisa may be a corruption/ Prakritism of Mudgalīśa or Musalīśa.

Translation

Let it be known to you that — after we have earlier asked permission of the Vājasaneya branch (of the White Yajurveda) and have given a village Bhāṇḍāgāra-Tulapadraka in the district of Oṇī in return — this village (scil. Pāśipadraka) together with Kurapadraka, along with the rights to hidden treasures and deposits, the right to collect all taxes, immunity from all impositions, the right to impose fines for the ten offences, and the exemption from being entered by officials and constables, starting immediately, has been bestowed by us here and now, on the day of full moon of Māgha (?) with the offering of a libation and by means of (this) copper-plate charter, upon the feet of the illustrious Bhīmasoma, for the increase of merit of father, mother and ourselves and to be enjoyed as long as moon, stars and sun will last:

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> There are eight embodiments of Śiva, the Vigraheśvaras; the embodiments of Gahaneśa are the sixty-six Rudras who bestow grace (initiation) and who roam about in each *yuga*; now the Kali age has come and Lakulīśanātha has descended; he was born in the family of a brahmin named Somaśarman; after having been initiated by him (i.e. Somaśarman) in the Great Vow he became a moon on earth; and he again (i.e. Lakulīśanātha) initiated Mugalisa; then, in due succession of the lineage that started with Soma, the afore-mentioned Bhīmasoma — the pupil of the illustrious Tejasoma and grand-pupil of the illustrious *guru* Rudrasoma — has been justly raised to the position responsible for the protection of the *tapovana* attached to the Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka (Temple), which has been erected by ourselves. The donation is made to meet the expenses of ceremonies, initiations, teaching and housing of pupils and grand-pupils and to restore the shrines that have fallen into decay and are in need of repair.

The inscription is of paramount importance for more than one reason. One of them is that, in addition to the lineage of preceptors, it gives doctrinal arguments to legitimize the claims of the recipient Bhīmasoma. These doctrinal arguments should be compared with what we know of Pāśupata theology. In order to follow the *paraṃparā* of teachers back to Śiva himself, the text refers first to the latter's eight forms that are designated 'Vigraheśvaras.' As we have seen above, Vigraheśvara is, according to one tradition,[27] the name of the deity who stands at the apex of our cosmos, in the *granthi*, where it borders on the Pure Universe. There he is surrounded by eight Rudras, four of whom bear names that mark the Aṣṭamūrti since *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* 6.2-3. Just like Rudra, the (grand)son of Prajāpati, through his eight forms, is the actual manifestation of God in the created cosmos, sometimes represented as the divine child,[28] so, it seems, is Śiva in his eightfold form of Vigraheśvara ('the Lord of Form') considered the fountain-head of our universe in the theology underlying the inscription at issue. Then the inscription mentions Gahaneśa ('the Lord of the Abyss'), the Rudra who rules the lowest world of the Māyā Reality in the sub-barrier

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[27] This seems to be the tradition of the Śaiva Siddhānta as represented by the *Niśvāsamukha* and the *Matańga* (see above p. 3).

[28] See BAKKER 1996, 9ff. Cf. the *Śrīpūrvaśāstra* (5.28-29), referred to by Kṣemarāja (see above n. 8), which assigns eight deities (*īśvarāṣṭa*) to this reality, forming a *maṇḍala* of the size of a thumb and headed by Mahādeva, the first of the Aṣṭamūrti.

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layer, directly above the 'abyss' or 'net of bonds,' the material world. He is said to roam about in sixty-six embodiments in successive *yugas* and Lakulīśa is just the last of these incarnations in the present Kaliyuga.

In a letter already mentioned (see above n. 7) Professor Alexis SANDERSON brought an unpublished text to my notice, the *Jayadrathayāmala* (JRY), which belongs to the (later) Bhairava scriptures of Agamic Saivism. SANDERSON kindly placed at my disposal a portion of the edition he made of this text (4.449-460), based on a MS in the National Archives in Kathmandu.[29] He drew my attention to the fact that this text describes the sixty-six embodiments as 'the Bhavas who reside in the sixty-six Māna (i.e. Pramāṇa) [worlds].'[30] These embodiments or manifestations are divided into two lines of gurus (*gurupaṅktis*), a set of twenty-eight Śivas and one of thirty-eight Rudras, which are associated with different levels of Śaiva teaching. The first set, which begins with Śveta and of which the last two gurus are Someśa and Lakulīśa, is said to bestow both exegesis of the scriptures and, occasionally, initiation, following the division of the Pramāṇajñāna.[31] The second line of thirty-eight Rudras, which begins with Vareśvara and ends with Vaṣaṭkāra, is said to be authorized to granting initiation and is described as propounding the teachings of Bhairava.[32]

There can be little doubt that the inscription at issue in mentioning the sixty-six Rudra manifestations descending from Gahaneśa, 'who roam about in every *yuga* to favour with initiation,' refers to the doctrine mentioned in the *Jayadrathayāmala*. This is again reinforced by the fact that the last two of the twenty-eight Śiva manifestations, Someśa and Lakulīśa also figure prominently in the inscription.[33] To

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[29] *Catalogue* Vol. 5, MS No. 4650.

[30] JRY 4.449: *adhunā gūḍhanirgūḍhān paṅktiyugmagatāñ śṛṇu / śvetādivaṣatkārāntān bhavān ṣaṭṣaṣṭimānagān //449//* Edition A. SANDERSON.

[31] JRY 4.453-454ab: *someśo lakulīśaś ca hy aṣṭāviṃśaty amī śivāḥ / vyākhyānānugrahakarāḥ pramāṇajñānabhedataḥ //4.453// prāsaṅgikī tv asau teṣāṃ sadyo 'nugrahakāritā /.* Edition A. SANDERSON. This list of twenty-eight manifestations of Śiva conforms by and large with similar lists of *avatāras* known from several other texts dealing with the Pāśupata system as founded by Lakulīśa; see e.g. DVIVEDA 1982 for a summary and comparison of these lists.

[32] JRY 4. 454cd-455ab, 459: *dvitīyā gurupaṅktir yā vareśādyaṣṭatriṃśikā //4.454// sadyonugrahakartṛtve tasyā devy adhikāritā / [...] vauṣaṭkāro vaṣaṭkāraḥ kathitās tu gurūttamāḥ / bhairavāptapravaktāraḥ svādhaḥsthānagatānuśaḥ //4.459//* Edition A. SANDERSON.

[33] From this evidence we may infer that a distinct Bhairava tradition within Saivism was acknowledged by the middle of the 7th century; it would seem, however, that Bhīmasoma did not

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Someśa or Somaśarman, as he is called in the inscription, who is said to have initiated Lakulīśa in the Mahāvrata, we will return below. Lakulīśanātha, unlike Somaśarman, is explicitly said in the inscription to be an *avatāra* and through him the lineage of the donee Bhīmasoma is directly connected with the divine (Rudra) *paraṃparā*: Gahaneśa, Vigraheśvara, Śiva. Bhīmasoma's lineage, namely, is said to stem from Lakulīśa through the latter's pupil Mugalisa, who was initiated by the Moon on Earth, Lakulīśa, and whom we have identified with Musula or Musulendra, the founder of the Mausula sect. If this identification is right, the conclusion would be natural that the lineage of Bhīmasoma belonged to the sect of the Mausulas, who, as we have seen, probably acknowledged the theology of an hierarchy of Rudra worlds, which plays such an important role in the inscription.

V Somaśarman and the Somasiddhānta

Here, however, we encounter a difficulty. Though Bhīmasoma and his predecessors no doubt belonged to the Pāśupata fold, the designation 'Mausula' does not occur in the inscription. With the Mausulas these *ācāryas* may have in common, it would seem, that they were engaged with ceremonies (*kriyā*) and worship rather than with ascetic practices, though they were in charge of the *tapovana* attached to the Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka Temple in Śrīpura. But how do we explain that their names end in *soma*? On account of these names I have argued (BAKKER *forthcoming*) that these *ācāryas* probably belonged to the Pāśupata sect known as Somasiddhānta, a sect that hardly, if at all, features in Agamic literature where it is concerned with the Atimārga, but which in later sources is often equated with the Kāpālikas.[34] Pāśupata ascetics whose names end in *soma* are known from several inscriptions in which they are said to be engaged in the Mahāvrata, the observance in which, according to the Malhar inscription, Lakulīśa was initiated by Somaśarman.[35] Consequently, another

himself belong to this tradition, since he affiliates himself to the first lineage of 'Śivas.'

[34] In the play *Prabodhacandrodaya* by Kṛṣṇamiśra (c. AD 1050-1100), the doctrine of the Somasiddhānta is identified with that of the Kāpālikas (Handiqui 1965, 640-645). Further see LORENZEN 1991, 82ff., 215ff.; PATHAK 1960, 25. Prof SANDERSON pointed out to me that the Kapālin Satyasoma and his companion Devasomā feature in the *Mattavilāsaprahasana* of the Pallava king Mahendravikramavarman (cf. LORENZEN 1991, 53).

[35] Prof.A. SANDERSON kindly provided me with the following information. The Indargarh Pāśupata stone inscription of AD 710-11 was engraved by a Mahāvratin with the name Cāmuṇḍasoma (Journal of the Bihar Research Society 1955, 249–261). A Mahāvratin Somibhaṭṭāraka/Sobadeva of

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question arises: who was this Somaśarman?

The name Somaśarman was already known from the *Vāyu*° and *Liṅgapurāṇas* and he is evidently the same as the Someśa named in the *Jayadrathayāmala* as Lakulīśa's predecessor (see above p. 11) These Purāṇas describe him as the 27th incarnation of Śiva, born in Prabhāsatīrtha, a holy place in Saurashtra near the Arabian Sea, famous for its Somanātha temple, an assignment that makes the impression of being secondary.[36] The legend told in the Malhar Plates, however, is apparently somewhat different. It says that Lakulīśanātha was born in the brahmin family of Somaśarman, who therefore may have been a senior contemporary of his. Moreover, Lakulīśa is said to have been initiated by this Somaśarman in the Mahāvrata and so became the 'Moon on Earth.' Somaśarman or his family (*kula*) thus appears, in the religious imagination of the believer, to have been the House (*śarman*) from which the Moon (*soma*) rose over the world (*jagadindu*). The play of words may allude to 'Soma' as a name of Śiva and the transfiguration undergone by Lakulīśa in the initiation ritual, which, when he underwent the anointment with ashes, made him shine like the moon. The relationship between Somaśarman and Lakulīśa seems thus to be somewhat similar to the one conceived in Christian theology between John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

VI The Evidence of the Skandapurāṇa

The theology underlying the inscription text seems also to have been known to the author(s) of the original *Skandapurāṇa* (SP). This text, too, places Somaśarman in the Kali age and though, admittedly, he is not credited with his initiation, he is said to have been the first one blessed with Lakulīśa's grace; the text apparently implies that the latter was born in Somaśarman's, i.e., Atri's House. The spot where the incarna-

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the Kolanupākā inscription of AD 1050 is described as proficient in expounding the Somasiddhānta (*Select Epigraphs of Andhra Padesh No.4*). Two inscriptions of the time of the Cola king Rājādhirāja II (Nos. 403 of 1896 and 206 of 1912 of the Madras Epigraphical Collection), mention a Somasiddhāntin, though 'soma' is not affixed to his name: Vāgīśabhaṭṭa (Epigraphia Indica (EI) XXVII (1947-48), 297f.). The predecessors of this and other priests associated with the Tiruvorriyur Temple, 'five hundred Brâhmaṇa *Mahâvratins*,' were, according to the account of the Sthalapurāṇa, 'brought from the banks of the Ganges' (EI XXVII, 300 n. 1).

[36] VāP 23.214-217; LiP 1.24.120-124. Another feature that makes the impression of being secondary is that Akṣapāda (=Gautama?), Kumāra (or Kaṇāda), Ulūka and Vatsa are mentioned as his pupils. DVIVEDA 1982 remarks about him: 'Prabhāsatīrtham āsādya somaśarmā prādurbhūtaḥ / nāsti pāṭhāntaram atra /.'

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tion took place is called Kārohaṇa.[37] The relevant passage reads:

> And God, the Lord of the gods, who is possessed of supreme sovereignty, after having assumed a white-bodied form (i.e. a body like that of the moon), went to the auspicious House of Atri, (that is to say, he went to the house of a man) named Somaśarman, who was born in the lineage of Atri. That lord, i.e. Śaṃkara, blessed/initiated that *brahman*-knowing brahmin belonging to Atri's lineage together with his (whole) family by bestowing upon him perfection in yoga. Thereupon, after he had initiated this excellent brahmin and his family, O Vyāsa, God went to Ujjayanī (Ujjain) and entered the cremation ground. There the bull-bannered God took a bath in ashes, took a torch in his left hand and sat down (in meditation).[38]

In Ujjain Lakulīśa accepted Kauśika as his first disciple,[39] and then this 'white-bodied' or moon-like incarnation went to Jambūmārga, Mathurā and Kānyakubja, where he initiated Gārgya, Mitra and a fourth person who is only said to have been born in a good *gotra* in the country of the Kurus, but whose name may have been Kauruṣ(y)a (SP 167.122-123); Lākulin taught them his own doctrine (*svasiddhānta*), known as 'Pañcārtha,' which, as the *Skandapurāṇa* strongly suggests, was different from the doctrine of his senior, the blessed Somaśarman.[40] I take this as an indication that the author(s) of the *Skandapurāṇa* belonged to circles that were closer to the Lākula than to the Mausula division. This, again, would explain that, in contrast to the inscription, this text does not proclaim that Lakulīśa had been initiated by Somaśarman, a tenet essential to Bhīmasoma and his predecessors.

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[37] Cf. Kauṇḍinya *ad Pāśupatasūtra* 1.1 (p. 3); Hara 1967, 157 n. 1.

[38] SP 167.124-127: *bhagavān api deveśaḥ paramaiśvaryasaṃyutaḥ / atrivaṃśaprasūtasya nāmnā vai somaśarmaṇaḥ rūpaṃ kṛtvā sitāṅgaṃ tu jagāmātrigṛhaṃ śubham //124// sa taṃ brahmavidaṃ vipram ātreyaṃ sakulaṃ vibhuḥ / yogasiddhipradānena anujagrāha śaṃkaraḥ //125// anugṛhya tadā vyāsa sakulaṃ dvijasattamam / jagāmojjayanīṃ devaḥ śmaśānaṃ ca viveśa ha //126// sa tatra bhasmanātmānam avaguṇṭhya vṛṣadhvajaḥ / ulmukaṃ vāmahastena gṛhītvā samupāviśat //127 //* This edition of the text was prepared by my student P. Bisschop (cf. SP_{Bh} 167.134-138).

[39] Cf. Kauṇḍinya *ad Pāśupatasūtra* 1.1 (p. 3f.).

[40] SP 167.128-130: *tatra prathamam ādāya śiṣyaṃ kauśikam īśvaraḥ / jambūmārge dvitīyaṃ ca mathurāyāṃ tato 'param //128// kānyakubje tataś cānyam anugṛhya jagatpatiḥ / svasiddhāntaṃ dadau yogam uvācedaṃ ca lākulī //129// rahasyaṃ paramaṃ hīdaṃ pañcārtha iti saṃjñitam / viprān mocayituṃ datto yuṣmabhyaṃ martyabandhanāt / anayā dīkṣayā viprān prāpayadhvaṃ paraṃ padam //130//* Edition P. Bisschop (cf. SP_{BH} 167.138cd-141).

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VII Somaśarman, Somavaṃśa and Somasiddhānta

When we return to the Malhar inscription and combine its evidence with that of the *Skandapurāṇa*, we may say that there evidently was a tradition within the Pāśupata fold that recognized a, what we may call a 'Pāśupata milieu' before the appearance of Lakulīśa. Somaśarman belonged to this milieu. In the Pāñcārthika-Pāśupata context he was mostly either ignored, or relegated to a previous *yuga* by being promoted to an *avatāra* of Śiva himself. Both our sources, however, the inscription and the *Skandapurāṇa*, emphasize that, though they recognize Somaśarman as the fountain-head, Somaśarman is not an incarnation, and he or his tradition derived legitimacy from the fact that Lakulīśa was born in his House. According to the *Skandapurāṇa*, Somaśarman himself was favoured with initiation by Lakulīśa, according to the inscription it was the other way round, but, the inscription adds, the lineage of Bhīma-soma, received its 'certificate of divinity' through Mugalisa, who was initiated by the incarnated Śiva himself.

The combined evidence of both sources thus seems to suggest that there existed an early Śaiva tradition that, on the one hand, recognized the uniqueness of Lakulīśa's incarnation, but that, on the other hand, distanced itself from the Pāñcārthika and Lākula divisions. In its initial stage this tradition, or one strand of it, may have been named after its putative preceptor 'Mausula'; in the course of time other groups may have been assimilated, and gradually a distinct theology and praxis may have been developed, which became known as the Somasiddhānta, thus preserving a reference to a distant saint who was hallowed as its founder, Somaśarman. Part of this tradition, again, may eventually have merged with groups that produced the Bhairava texts such as the *Jayadrathayāmala*, that is to say, became indistinguishable from the Kāpālikas.[41] Others may have joined the Śaiva Siddhānta, of which a *maṭhikā* was attached to the very same temple complex of Bāleśvara-bhaṭṭāraka in Śrīpura.[42]

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[41] SANDERSON 1988, 668.

[42] A hoard of nine copper-plate grants of Mahāśivagupta Bālārjuna was found in Sirpur (SHASTRI 1995 II, 376-379). In an article in JESI 18 (1992) A. M. SHASTRI discusses the contents of these charters in more detail (see also SHASTRI *forthcoming*). It appears that in this Sirpur hoard there are altogether seven charters that record grants made to Śaiva *ācāryas* said to issue from Nandapura, but who were living in this *maṭhikā* in Śrīpura. The lineage of these *ācāryas* should therefore been seen as a subbranch of the Nandapur one; it can be reconstructed from these grants: 1) *śaivācārya* Aghoraśiva, 2) *bhagavatpāda* Dīrghaśiva, 3) *bhagavatpāda* Vyāpaśiva, and 4) *sthānaguru* Astraśiva. All the donations were made to meet the expenses on repairs, daily worship and musical concerts.

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The *Skandapurāṇa* goes still one step further in its mystification of the origins by affiliating Somaśarman to the lineage of Atri, the father of the Moon, that is to the Lunar Race, the Somavaṃśa.[43] There are signs that this powerful symbolism was not lost on the rulers of Dakṣiṇa Kosala. It can hardly be coincidence that the Malhar inscription is a charter issued by a king who proclaims to belong to the Somavaṃśa.[44] After the theological and legendary superstructure, the actual *paraṃparā* of Bhīmasoma is said to begin with Soma, thus creating, possibly intentionally, a profound ambiguity: Soma who? Soma that is Śiva, Soma that is the son of Atri, the Moon, Soma that is Somaśarman, or just a preceptor named Soma who lived long after the times of Lakulīśa and Mugalisa, but who happened to start a tradition of ascetic teachers within the Pāśupata fold?

The intimate relationship of the royal Soma dynasty with this particular branch of the Pāśupatas may thus have been endorsed by an ideology according to which both claimed descent from Soma — the dynastic one from Soma, the son of Atri, the sectarian one from the 'Moon on Earth' that appeared in the family of Somaśarman, that is in the House of the Moon. This House may therefore have been conceived by the mythmakers of the time as the joint cradle of two lineages: a worldly one culminating in Mahāśivagupta, the Somavaṃśin king of Kosala, and a religious one headed by Bhīmasoma, an *ācārya* living in the temple complex founded and patronized by his royal counterpart.

From these inscriptions and the names of the Śaiva *ācāryas* ending in *śiva* it becomes clear that the Śaiva Siddhānta was firmly established in Dakṣiṇa Kosala, at least from the second half of the 6th century onwards. The original headquarters may have been in Nandapura, a place not properly identified.

[43] That this tradition was not completely obliterated in later centuries, but locally survived well into the second millennium is proved by the *Kāravaṇamāhātmya*. This late text sings the greatness of the Kārohaṇa *tīrtha*, which is unanimously identified with the village Karvan c. 30 km north of Baroda (D.R. Bhandarkar 1906-7; LORENZEN 1991, 177). We encounter the following pedigree of Lakulīśa in the fourth *adhyāya* of this far from homogeneous text: *kāyāvarohaṇe puṇye tīrthe tīrthavarottame / bhṛgukṣetrapavitrārtham avatīrṇo yuge yuge // ādikalpāvasāne tu brahmakalpe purātane / brahmaṇo manasaḥ putro atrināmā ca viśrutaḥ // atris tu janayāmāsa ātreyaṃ nāma nāmataḥ / ātreyād agniśarmo 'pi agniśarmasutaḥ śuciḥ // somaśarmeti vikhyāto dharmaśīlo jitendriyaḥ / somaśarmasuto jāto viśvarūpo dvijottamaḥ // viśvarūpād ahaṃ jāto bālarūpadharo haraḥ / yena vyāptaṃ jagat sarvaṃ trailokyaṃ sacarācaram //* (DALAL 1920, 51).

[44] ll. 4-5: *somavaṃśasaṃbhavaḥ paramamāheśvaro mātāpitṛpādānudhyātaḥ śrī mahāśivaguptarājadevaḥ*. The likelihood of such a connection was first suggested to me by Rahul Kumar SINGH.

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